Kasault which is the only manufacturer of JE vaccine in the country manufactures about 2 lakhs doses of the mouse brain vaccine annually for JE control. Since this quantity is not sufficient to meet the requirement of Andhra Pradesh, the State Govt, has been permitted to import inactivated mouse brain JE vaccine after obtaining clearance from the Drugs Controller General of India.

News-item "Government dithers on lifeline for cancer patients"

2712. SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item captioned, "Government dithers on lifeline for cancer patients", which appeared in the 'Times of India' dated 19th July, 2002;

(b) if so, Government's reaction thereto; and

(c) the difficulties of Government to give a certificate as required by the pharmaceutical company although a similar certificate was furnished on the last occasion also under a similar situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE INTHE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI A. RAJA): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. Thalidomide is well-known to cause severe birth defects and because of this, the drug was banned all over the world. However, based on the evidence and study reports, USFDA allowed the drug Thalidomide for treatment of leprosy complications for which no good alternative therapies are available for such patients. Thalidomide has also been found useful in the treatment of refractory cases of multiple myeloma. Dr. J.K.Grover, Additional Professor, Pharmacology, AIIMS, New Delhi had conducted trial on patients of multiple myeloma, for which Thalidomide tablets were supplied by M/s Grunenthal, Germany. M/s Grunenthal, Germany, subsequently discontinued the supply of the drug seeking an undertaking from the Government in the form of an agreement.The firm has now agreed to resume the supply of the drug through Central Leprosy Training and Research Institute, Chingelpet as per previous agreement.